



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARIZONA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO COCAINE POSSESSION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Arizona man pleaded guilty in federal court today to possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute.

Jon D. Athenour, 28, of Phoenix, Ariz., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to being in possession with intent to distribute at least 500 grams of cocaine in Columbia on Dec. 14, 2002.

Athenour was driving a Ford F150 when he was stopped for speeding on Dec. 14, 2002, Graves said. Law enforcement officers found a briefcase with packages containing approximately 2.2 kilograms of cocaine in the car, as well as several small marijuana roaches in the ashtray, and a loaded Springfield .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol under the armrest between the two front seats.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Athenour** admitted that he knew the cocaine was in the truck and that he was being paid \$4,000 to drive it to Indianapolis, Ind.

Under federal statutes, **Athenour** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to 40 years, plus a fine up to \$2 million. His sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony P. Gonzalez. It was investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow